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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 56

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Mary Cochran Pigford
Smyser of Oak Ridge.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Mary Cochran Pigford Smyser; and

WHEREAS, Mary Pigford Smyser was an exemplary individual who was devoted to her family and friends and who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born on August 6, 1920 to Lamar and Zula Harrington Pigford in Meridian, Mississippi, Mary Smyser spent the majority of her eighty years caring for her family and the members of her community; and

WHEREAS, she graduated in June of 1941 from the Mississippi State College for Women with a bachelor of science degree in chemistry and then went on to do graduate work in medical technology at Emory University Medical School; and

WHEREAS, during and immediately following World War II, Mrs. Smyser worked as a medical technologist and chemist in Atlanta and then at the DuPont Experimental Station in Wilmington, Delaware; and

WHEREAS, she first came to Oak Ridge in August of 1948 to work with the Biology Division at Oak Ridge National Laboratory; in 1949, she became a member of the original staff of Dr. Marshall Brucer, the first director of the Medical Division of Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies; and

WHEREAS, she worked as a technologist until the mid-1950s, later to return as a research assistant to Dr. Gould Andrews, Dr. Brucer's successor; and

WHEREAS, in the early-1950s Mrs. Smyser was one of a group of volunteers who organized a state-accredited high school for the black students of Oak Ridge; there she taught chemistry and experienced the pleasure of seeing several of her students graduate from what was known briefly as Scarboro High School; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Smyser was one of the founding members of the Oak Ridge Art Center, and she served on its board of directors; she was a renowned painter herself; and

WHEREAS, there were three major showings of her work at the Oak Ridge Art Center, and her works were often chosen for the annual Oak Ridge Open Show; and

WHEREAS, she and Helen Jernigan were the writers of *The Oak Ridger's* column "Ask Incky" when it first came out in 1971; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Smyser was a longtime member of the Oak Ridge chapter of the League of Women Voters; active in the local Democratic Party, she was the first woman to serve as foreperson of the Anderson County Grand Jury; and

WHEREAS, Mary Pigford Smyser was an active and devout member of the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church, which she had served faithfully in years past as a Sunday school teacher and as a member of the board; and

WHEREAS, Mary Smyser was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mary Smyser enjoyed the loving companionship of her husband, Richard D. Smyser, the founding editor of *The Oak Ridger*, who she married on May 12, 1950 at Oak Ridge's first multi-congregational Chapel on the Hill; and

WHEREAS, she was the proud parent of two daughters, Lucy Smyser Tashman and Katherine Mary Smyser, and a devoted grandparent to Michael, Paul, and Nathan Tashman and Ally, Quinn, and Mariel McAleer; and

WHEREAS, she was also survived by a brother, Thomas H. Pigford, and his wife, Elizabeth, two sons-in-law, Ira Tashman and V. J. McAleer, and another sister-in-law, Marion Pigford; and

WHEREAS, she was preceded in death by a brother, Robert L. Pigford; and

WHEREAS, Mary Smyser leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional artist and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Mary Cochran Pigford Smyser, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living her life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mary Cochran Pigford Smyser.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.